

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

KNOX COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting

Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – October 31, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.

A Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was held on Thursday, October 31, 2019, at 5:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present: Commissioner Dorothy G. Meriwether, District #1, Commissioner Richard L. Parent, District #2 and Commissioner Sharyn L. Pohlman, District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Assistant Jail Administrator Kathy Carver, Correctional Administrator Ray Porter, Sheriff Carroll, Chief Deputy Polky, Captain Paul Pinkham and Warren Heath, IV. – Knox County Corrections.

Budget Committee members present: Chair Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns and Nick Lapham. **Absent:** *Thomas Marshall, Jr.*

Others in Attendance: William Najpauer - Planning & Development Director from MCEDD, Sarah Mattox, Program Director at Restorative Justice Project, Carrie Sullivan, Executive Director, Lucy Funkhouser - Restorative Justice Project Volunteer, David Long – (Rockland Resident) Restorative Justice Project Volunteer, Ed Modell - Rockland resident, Charles Grover – Thomaston resident, Wendy Pelletier – Hope resident, Andrew Dorr – Vinalhaven Town Manger and Pinney Beebe-Center – Legislature - Local House Representative.

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting

Commission Hearing Room

Thursday – October 31, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.

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| I. | 5:00 | Meeting called to order (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Richard Parent, Jr. for the Knox County Commission) |
| II. | 5:01 | Public Comment |
| III. | 5:05 | Approve Minutes (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Richard Parent, Jr. for the Knox County Commission)
1. Minutes of the Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 17, 2019 – Commission to approve only.
2. Minutes of the Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 24, 2019 |
| IV. | 5:10 | Budget Review
1. MCEED (Pg.22)
2. Restorative Justice Project (Pg. 22)
3. Sheriff's Department – Jail Division (Pgs. 17-18)
4. Sheriff's Department – Patrol (Pg. 20-21) |
| V. | | Adjourn |

I. Meeting Called to Order

The October 31, 2019 Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke and Commissioner Chair Richard Parent, Jr. at 5:00 P.M.

II. Public Comment:

None.

- Chair Duke stated that if anyone has a general comment on an item that's not on tonight agenda please hold those comments until it is appropriate.

Comments from County Administrator Hart:

- A few letters that were written by town officials in support of MCEDD's funding request were distributed to the Commission and Budget Committee Members:
 - 1) Letter from Tom Luttrell – Rockland City Manager
 - 2) Letter from Audra Caler-Bell – Camden Town Manager
 - 3) Letter from Bob Falciani – Chairman of Camden Selectboard
 - 4) Email from Jay Feyler – Town Manager of Union
 - 5) Union Selectmen voted on October 15th in support
 - Knox County held a meeting on October 1st – a lot of Mangers (*not necessarily elected officials*) were speaking in support of MCEDD.
 - Ed Modell sent an email in support of Restorative Justice Project.
 - Natasha Irving – District Attorney sent a letter supporting Restorative Justice Project
 - Commissioner Pohlman had a question about the percentage of what Restorative Justice's request was – the answer to her question was forwarded to all.
 - An email from Budget Committee Member Stearns regarding some questions about the Sheriff's budget – the answer to his questions was forwarded to all.
 - At last week's meeting there was a question about the call volume for Communications – Interim Communications Director provided Administrator Hart with the numbers and he forwarded them to all.
 - Town of Thomaston would like to appoint Charles Grover to fill the vacant District 8 seat – the appointment will be held at the November 7th Meeting. If this is approved then it will go to the Bureau of Elections and he will be sworn in. The District #8 seat term will be ready for next year (2020).
- ***Please note: All votes taken at each Joint Commission & Budget Committee Budget Review Meetings on Departmental Budgets are "straw votes", with the exception of the December 5, 2019 final vote on the 2020 Knox County Budget.***

III. Approve Minutes

1. Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 24, 2019
 - *Randy Stearns made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 24, 2019. Gayle Gallant seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
 - *Commissioner Meriwether made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 17 & October 24, 2019. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

IV. Budget Review:

1. MCEDD

William Najpauer, Planning & Development Director spoke regarding the overview:

- MCEDD is a Planning & Economic Development organization that currently serves five Communities in Knox (as members) which includes Camden, Rockport, Rockland, Thomaston, So. Thomason and St. George recently voted to join.
- We offer a full range of services that encompasses all sorts of planning from ordinance writing, board training, comprehensive planning, transportation planning, recreation planning, just a full gamut of anything that a town will undertake under the realm of planning or the responsibility that a planning board or board of appeals would take on.

- MCEDD also offers economic development with towns; we have assisted the Town of Thomaston with an economic development committee.
- We do a lot of grant writing with towns to bring funds into our member Communities.
- MCEDD works closely with communities and individuals to help them reach their next step towards achieving their goals. MCEDD offers a wide range of services through one-on-one interactions with the expert staff to make sure that there is a plan in place to best fit each individual.
- We are requesting funding for all of the Communities within Knox County. The proposal is approximately \$37,000, and that reflects that those 5 Communities have paid their dues for 6 months into the 2020 fiscal year.
- If this grant is approved then all the towns in Knox County would be able to utilize our services.
- This would also fill a void because the Midcoast Regional Planning Commission has ceased their function and will be voting to dissolve that organization in November or December. MCEDD will be taking custody of their records/planning records, and will fill the gap that the dissolution of Midcoast Regional Planning Commission will be leaving.
- Entire service area runs from Harpswell in Brunswick all of Sagadahoc, all of Lincoln, all of Knox, and the Southern end of Waldo County. Lincolnville is currently a member of our Community. Previously, Searsmont, Belmont and Northport were members; they come in and out of membership based on their particular needs. Damariscotta, from Lincoln County just joined.

Questions asked:

- Budget Committee Member asked out of the 18 towns who have reached out to you who are not members currently? Mr. Najpauer responded by saying 3 have reached out. The membership is typically in the interest of the larger Communities. Some of the smaller towns their needs are different.
- Budget Committee Member asked do we have any Grant writing capacity right now. Administrator Hart stated that overall most are EMA. For the County there is no Grant writer and anything we have done was done “in house”.
- A Commissioner stated that a So. Thomaston had a road problem with Spruce Head Island and reached out to Mr. Najpauer and received a Grant for \$330,000 before the dues were even paid.
- Another Commissioner spoke and stated that a lot of the small towns are not aware of advantages they could gain of becoming a member. Most towns tend to do things themselves, and personally, they would be way ahead if they became a member and took advantage of these wonderful services.
- One Board Member told his 3 Communities about MCEDD and what they offer for services.
- A Commissioner stated that if Communities were made more aware of the services that can be provided they would be more likely to take advantage.
- A Budget Member stated he is trying to distinguish where there is a County wide need for planning vs. the aggregation of individual municipality needs. Mr. Najpauer responded by saying that one example is “football communities”, we try to make sure they take advantage of grants that they have the capacity to undertake. One project we’ve been working on for over the past 3 years is looking to identify sites for marine dependent use on the water for aquaculture, fishing, shipbuilding, things like that. That is certainly a need in our area. Another project we are undertaking is in Harpswell to assess sea level rise, and the impact on waterfronts to alert the towns if there is anything they will need to do. Mr. Najpauer stated we are also starting an affordable housing regional forum which is in the works right now. The last thing we are starting is a regional trail plan which will connect from Bath all the way to Camden, Camden to Belfast, Belfast to Unity, and from Unity to Winslow. Finally, a loop will be created, but this is a 50 year plan. By completing the trails it should bring tourist dollars.
- Wendy Pelletier, Resident from Hope (on the Board of Selectmen) was at the October 1st meeting too, and feels strongly for the people promoting MCEDD, but in the Town of Hope do not have the need. I feel that it would be disingenuous to draw in all the towns especially those that are not reaching out. I think it’s a great option but I don’t foresee the need for the Town of Hope to join

unless, and until we had a project the size of what most of these other towns are looking at. I am very concerned about towns that are not reaching out and still having to pay. I hope some of you consider that.

- A Budget Committee Member asked what are the costs involved on writing grants for a particular project for towns. Mr. Najpauer stated that most of the grants we do not charge for but we always let you know up front. Comprehensive planning we typically charge 1/5th of the cost that a regular consultant would charge.
- Another Budget Committee Member asked with the change of Midcoast Planning Commission going away, and you are acquiring the records, are any other assets or staff coming along? Mr. Najpauer responded by saying, there will be no additional staff or assets just a couple of file cabinets with records will be all.
- A Budget Committee Member wanted to clarify that roughly this year's grant request was for \$37,000, and that's because of some of the Communities that have already paid in. So, what is the true annual cost if those Counties hadn't already paid in.? Mr. Najpauer stated it would be approximately \$49,600. (In future years this will go up).
- A Commissioner stated that with the towns that are already members it's a wash and will not affect the bottom line. After looking at the list, well more than half are members, and basically a handful has not joined yet. The only way it can be equitably done is by having the County pay for everybody, and to have fair representation across the board. Plus, (*reiterating what Mr. Najpauer already said*) it also gives the benefit of allowing MCEDD's services to the County Government which they can certainly benefit from that.
- A Budget Committee Member stated at the last meeting our Regional Communications System will have to be upgraded because the Federal Government is mandating this change. I see for the small communities it can write one grant instead of each town writing their own. By having this it would offset the costs. You cannot buy a radio for what you pay for what you will pay to be a member of this organization.
- A Commissioner stated that the current & future benefits far outweigh the investment being asked tonight.
- Andrew Dorr, Town Manager of Vinalhaven stated that Vinalhaven has been a member of Midcoast Regional Planning for quite a while and use them as needed. We should use them more actually. I feel that by not considering this option of becoming a member, you fail to see the possibility of what regional approach MCEDD will bring.
- Chair Duke stated that MCEDD bills towns by population and Knox County is right around 24,000. So half the County (to a degree) is currently being served by MCEDD. The reason why we haven't supported economic development in this county is because we used to be part of EMDC when it was poorly run. It was badly managed for years, and never saw a real good return on our money.
- Wendy Pelletier, Resident of Hope (on the Board of Selectmen) stated she is appealing for consideration of letting towns and their own select boards decide this issue for themselves as opposed to making a blanket statement that everyone has to be drawn in. Chair Duke asked her if she was speaking tonight as a Board of Selectmen or a Resident. Wendy Pelletier stated she was speaking as a Resident but she is on the Board.
- A Budget Committee Member stated that he appreciated exactly what Wendy Pelletier said tonight. There is a number of Communities that may not want this, and we may force this tax on them. I think we need to leave it up to the Communities to decide if they want to utilize the services or not.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$49,671:

In favor: 2 (Bob Duke & Barry Norris)

Against: 1 (Shawn Levasseur)

Abstained: 4 (Randy Stearns, Gayle Gallant, Roger Peabody & Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$49,671:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Jr., Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

2. Restorative Justice Project

Sarah Mattox, Program Director spoke:

- Mission & Mission Statement was handed out to all Commissioners & Budget Committee Members.
- Chair Duke stated that the DA previously came and spoke in support of Restorative Justice
- Sarah wanted to acknowledge and appreciate several Knox County residents who are in the room to support the presentation, along with Carrie Sullivan, Interim Executive Director, State Rep Pinny Beebe-Center, Ed Modell, partners from the Sheriff's Department and Jail and David Long, Volunteer.
- The proposal seeks funding in the amount of \$24,500 which would allow us to create a half time position in Knox County for a Restorative Justice Coordinator. This person would have 2 primary responsibilities:
 - 1) To serve as a hub for adult cases referred to the Restorative Justice program either by the District Attorney' Office or by Law Enforcement Officials, by victims themselves or Community Members who are affected. That process in short involves engaging victim offender affected Community and a facilitated circle-based process in the wake of a crime, to discuss how people were affected and what needs to be done to make things as right as possible. For Court-based referrals there is a good outcome offer on the table. We are reducing a level of contact with the Criminal Justice System in addition to ensuring the needs of the Victims and the Community who are affected is attended to through that process.
 - 2) Offer training and coaching for the Restorative Practice Implementation at the Knox County Jail. Restorative Practice Implementation is we have to build relationships proactively amongst one another so that there is stronger sense of safety and sense of trust. When we know each other we are more likely to come to the table to repair harm when it happens. There is a proactive element and a responsive element. This offers high accountability and a high degree of support.
- Would like to thank United Midcoast Charities for their funding support and the Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Services. We have been facilitating this process already in Knox County with a limited amount of funding. In this past fiscal year in Knox County, 370 Citizens participated in Restorative Justice Processes. 92% of those agreements that were reached were successfully completed, and 94 % of Victims who participated were satisfied with that process and indicated that it met their needs.
- Sarah Mattox stated that District Attorney, Natasha Irving has indicated by her conservative estimates she would like to see 100 adult cases or more referred to Restorative Justice for Community based resolution in the coming year.
- We hope that by distributing the responsibly amongst Community stakeholders we can also distribute the gains of Restorative Justice Processes.
- RSU 13 is the first school District in the State of Maine to work towards becoming a fully Restorative District.
- Sarah Mattox shared a story reiterating the importance of Restorative Justice: That same implementation plan is at play at the Maine Coastal Re-entry Center. A former re-entry resident came in and said I'm wondering if we can use Restorative Justice for my second grader. He is acting up in school and I'm worried about him. I think that if Restorative practice had been available to me, I wouldn't have ended up being incarcerated for 12 years. That is to me, is an illustration of the power of Restorative practice and binding Community together. There is an opportunity to say "you are more than the harm that you committed", and that by high accountability and high support and attending to the need so everyone that has been affected we can find our way through. This way we are not incarcerating as many people so that we can word go get upstream and prevent those harms from happening.

- Over the past fiscal year we have logged over more than 1,000 volunteer hours in Knox County. Already in the past year in donations we have earned more than we are asking for you to support. If you were to choose to support this request what we might build together in service of the citizens of Knox County.
- Sarah Mattox stated that data varies, but around the world and in the U.S. different sources say that \$1 spent on Restorative Justice saves \$4. Another source out of the University of Wisconsin says \$1 spent on Restorative Justice saves \$8.
- Lastly, and most importantly, this would be an investment in your Community and advocacy. We hear that if we do what we've always done then we'll get what we've always gotten. This would be an opportunity for Knox County to lead the Prosecutorial District. Knox County would be the second County in the State of Maine. Hancock County's Budget Committee just approved a similar proposal.
- With your investment we look forward to engaging many more Citizens and Residents in Restorative Justice base responses to harm. Offering these cost effective non-adversarial solution focused second chances for the Citizens of Knox County.
- Ray Porter, Corrections Administrator for Waldo and Knox County spoke regarding Restorative Justice. I am excited to talk about Restorative Justice Project. We were desperate to find Restorative Programs. Early on Restorative Justice to us started out as a small mentoring program for the inmates. We started realizing that the slight connection from the Community was making a difference. The longer someone spends in the facility, especially when they are in Pretrial, the Pretrial population has no idea when they're going to get sentenced, there's no end in sight, and so there is no discharge plan, people are fixated on when they're going to get out of there. These people sit there and sit there until they show up in Court, they get time served and then they are out on the street. That's why the recidivism rate goes higher and higher. We discovered with Restorative Justice that this is a piece that is important. Initially, in 2004 we had a small contract with the mentoring services and then it developed over time and more people were learning about the program. About 15 years ago our average daily population was 68. Overtime, we have seen a significant reduction, and are finishing at an average daily reduction of population of about 23 inmates. This is due in large part to our contract with the Restorative Justice Project. One thing that is really important to us in the Criminal Justice System is to give voice to the Victims and that's what Restorative Justice does. Not only that, but when we do Restorative circles with offenders (with the research out there) it does build capacity for offenders to understand and start connecting with when they made "that choice" it had an impact on so many people, it had a ripple effect on families and everyone involved. In turn this does impact them and they start thinking and it reduces the recidivism rate. This is one of the most fiscally responsible things to do is to partner with the Restorative Justice Project.
- Local House Representative Pinney Beebe-Center read a letter she had composed in favor of Restorative Justice. She stated that Knox County Collaborative along with the assistant of Sheriff Carroll is creating an opportunity to do Corrections well and effectively. This Community collaborative and the sharing of leadership and Administration of the two Jails are being viewed as a best practice and being watched closely by the State.
- Ed Modell, Resident of So. Thomaston he is a new Resident as of February. He's practiced law over 45 years in Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia area. In his years of being an Attorney he's seen Restorative Justice, and said this really works. Mr. Modell has sat in on the circles and seen it work first hand. It would be wonderful for Knox County to be on the cutting edge.
- Lucy Funkhouser, Knox County Case Coordinator for Juveniles with Restorative Justice Project stated that it deserves to get more bandwidth in the County. This empowers some of the most vulnerable people in our Community. I am a Social Worker and really get a broad view of the Human Services in Knox County and I haven't seen anything else that empowers these people like this does. Think of them when you make this decision.
- A Budget Committee Member said you talked about the District Attorney wanting to increase the adult cases to 100, do you think the \$25,000 you have budgeted for the half time employee, is that on the assumption that there would be 100 cases or only 10? So if nothing changed would we need

this person? Sarah Mattox stated that this is a Community organizing effort, it's a culture change effort and I cannot tell you how many referrals we might get should you fund this position. What I can say is that we have about a dozen active facilitators in Knox County at this point in time. Right now Lucy is going to all the Juvenile court dates and building relationships and soliciting referrals where appropriate. This position would be that catalyst, the relationship builder in the adult world. Natasha Irving said if you can find the funds we will work with you to build a steady ramp towards what is a conservative estimate of 100 referrals per year to the Community Resolution Process.

- A Budget Committee Member asked will this half time person be able to handle 100 cases. Sarah Mattox replied by saying this person will not be doing much direct facilitation. This person would receive increased training, support and some stipend work.
- How do we value this how do we know this is an investment? We did receive a sizeable grant for this cause. Director Carrie Sullivan spoke and stated, in Belfast before we started the "shoplifting program" stores got 0% restitution. Now that the "shoplifting program" is in place we are now able to recover 100% restitution. There are impressive metrics and we did receive a 4 year grant from the Bureau of Justice and partnering with the Muskie School.
- A Budget Committee Member wanted to know how Ray Porter is being funded through Knox County where he also is working for Waldo County. Ray Porter stated that all costs are shared with Waldo County 50%.
- A Commissioner stated that it's not just the Jail that benefits from this; it's the whole County that benefits. We will live in a safer Community.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$24,500:

In favor: 5 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Roger Peabody and Randy Stearns)

Against: 0

Abstained: 2 (Shawn Levasseur & Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$24,500:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

3. Sheriff's Department – Jail Division

Sheriff Carroll spoke:

- Sheriff Carroll said there were 2 things he mainly wanted to focus on as becoming the new Sheriff.
- The first item is with the departure of Sheriff Dennison and Major Hinkley, putting a new leadership in place has been a priority. The new Sheriff, Tim Carroll appoints a Chief Deputy whom is now Patrick Polky and effective of July 1st is Ray Porter who is now the shared Corrections/Jail Administrator which is collaboration with Waldo and Knox County. By doing this it was a significant savings for Knox County.
- The second item is by putting the new Corrections/Jail Administrator Ray Porter in place started the process of the philosophy of Restorative Justice. It's the philosophy of helping people not just housing people in Jail, and that's what we have done for a long time. We need to try to help these people so they don't keep going in and out of the system and costing us money. Like it or not, we have to get rid of the stigmatism of they are inmates but at the same time we need to help those people so they are not repeat offenders. This year there is \$139,628 increase in the Budget and 96.4% no one has control over that part. A large part of that 96.4% is benefits, health insurance, retirement and unemployment. Of the increase roughly \$5,076 over last year's budget is the actual increase.
- Corrections/Jail Administrator Porter explained he was doing Corrections for close to 27 years. He's passionate and also conservative by nature. The reality is the Corrections Officers spend 12

hours a shift working one on one with those individuals that are incarcerated, and those are the people you really want to be vigilant with the most up to date training. Another huge piece is “programming” that research has shown that reduces the probability of somebody reoffending. If we can one, improve the lives of these individuals that historically have high recidivism rates, their coming in and out of facilities, restore their families and make this Community stronger. By doing this is reduces costs and recidivism over time with running a Corrections center.

- A Budget Committee Member asked about the major position and rank changes that took place earlier this year. Sheriff Carroll stated that we went to the reclassification, and looked at the job that they were doing, looked at the job descriptions we had in place and aligned the job descriptions to more of what they are doing now. The Corrections Officers are being trained on the run/on the job to deal with mental health issues, addiction people that are suffering from addiction so the job descriptions are now better aligned with that and that is all part of the increase.
- Another Budget Committee Member stated that the retirement benefit was significantly higher this year, was that a onetime thing related to Major Hinkley retiring. Also, how do we smooth those things out so we don’t get peaks and valleys in the budgeting process over time? Finance Director Robinson replied by saying Maine PERS came on to the Jail last year which is a higher cost to the County. Also, every year our employees are becoming better informed so more employees are joining the retirement program that weren’t part of the program before. This is what’s driving the cost to increase. As far as people physically retiring that comes out of resignation and termination.
- A Commissioner wanted to reiterate what Representative Beebe-Center said earlier about this collaboration between the Knox and Waldo Corrections Center is the first in the State. This is being looked at as a best practice for the State and a model that can be used elsewhere. There is an article that was printed in PenBay Pilot on June 13th, 2019 regarding the Sheriff’s Department and Corrections Department. I would like to commend all involved. The letter was read to all at the meeting.
- A Budget Committee Member asked about the overtime. How is overtime with your employees? How is it at the Jail? Sheriff stated that we have great staff and right now it is a State standard on how many Corrections Officers have to be on the floor at any time. If anyone calls out then it does make it a hardship and overtime is then taken. There is a balance of do we create more staffing or ask for more staffing, but at the same time we are looking at reducing the population so we are looking to bring that number down as far as the amount of Corrections Officers being mandated to be on the floor. Overtime issue is a balance that changes depending on different scenarios.
- Chair Duke asked what the occupancy is right now. Or the daily population? Sheriff stated the occupancy is 56 and it’s a 70 bed facility.
- A Budget Committee Member asked if there was any other projects that may be coming up in the future. Sheriff said that its hard to say because it’s a 30 year facility, and the boilers that are there are 30 years old. There is still work that needs to be done with HVAC, but money is not available for anything further right now. There are some things that will need to be addressed in the future.
- A Budget Committee Member asked if the Sheriff saw anything that would be mandated that would affect the budget. Sheriff said he doesn’t see anything right now. The Sheriff’s Association, County Administrators and County Commissioner are being met with to try to come up with, in legislation, something to do to instead of going back every year fighting to get State funding. Our goal is to have the State responsible for their inmates that are in our facilities.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$3,732,219:

In favor: 6 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody and Randy Stearns)

Against: 0

Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$3,732,219:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

4. Sheriff's Department - Patrol

Sheriff Carroll & Chief Deputy Polky spoke:

- Highlights of the Budget are the Civil, Detective Division and Administrative Staff.
- Sheriff said we are looking for 1 position which is the Vinalhaven position. It has been tough filling that opening, and on November 8th we will be meeting with the Commissioners and Town Mangers to discuss the whole lack of Vinalhaven coverage and what can be done.
- The increase in the total Budget is \$55,400. \$43,379 of that or 78% of that increase is benefits. The difference of the \$12,021 is half a percent of the total Patrol Budget. We did struggle this year with vacancies. For a few months, we were down a total of 5 Deputy positions and there is a total of 11. So with that, a lot of overtime was taken. Some Deputies have put well over 600 hours of overtime so far this year. Right now we're almost full staff, all but one position open, and hopefully this should bring some relief. That part is about a \$12,000 increase for this year.
- A Budget Committee Member said that in 2018 Shellfish Warden scheduled at \$96,000 and only \$14,000 was paid and now there is nothing in this year's budget for that. How is that now being covered? The Sheriff stated that it was a contracted position that we had with the 5 town Community Shellfish Program. That is no longer coming out the Sheriff's Office. The 5 town now has their own Shellfish Warden and it's out of the Sheriff's Departments hands.
- A Commissioner read a letter dated September 6, 2019, which was received from the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office (Troy Morton, Sheriff) in support of the Sheriff's Department. The letter was read to all that attended the meeting.
- A Budget Committee Member asked about the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, if the money was as difficult as the State funding was to collect on. Finance Director Robinson stated that they are actually one of the best agencies that we have to deal with.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$2,222,624:

In favor: 6 (Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, and Randy Stearns)
Against: 0
Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$2,222,624:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

5. Other

- Chair Duke spoke and stated that we have one more evening to review and we will be done. However, is there any more Department Heads we feel we need to bring back to discuss or question before we move to finalizing the Budget? If we do, we will need another meeting.
- Administrator Hart spoke and said that next week we have Knox –Lincoln Soil & Water, Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension, Airport Security and Airport. If everyone agrees they are all set then we will not have another meeting on November 14th.
- A Budget Committee Member asked if there would be more concrete numbers as far as Worker Comp., insurance etc. Administrator Hart stated yes we will have numbers for Worker Comp, Health Insurance, modifications for LP Gas and heating fuel. The only thing we may not have is the Risk Pool number which is not a big driver of the Budget.
- A Commissioner asked Finance Director Robinson if she could put in out a memo or address the Commissioners and Budget Committee Members regarding the Surplus & Reserves. Next

meeting, they would like to have a synopsis of what she was telling of them last week about her thinking and reasoning about the recommended levels of Surplus that we carry. Not only for the whole County but the 3 that are separated out.

- Chair Duke suggested maybe Finance Director Robinson give us all a 1 page summary of those changes/updates for the Budget next Thursday. This way we can plug those changes into our own pages. Just thinking it may make this easier.

V. Adjourn

- *Randy Stearns made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gayle Gallant seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Meriwether made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

The next Joint Quarterly Budget Committee & Commission Meeting will be held on **November 7th**
@ 5:00 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee and Knox County Commission will approve these minutes
at the Joint Meeting held on November 7th, 2019.**